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COMIC SHOP NEWS™

THE CLOCK

The Clock: Every Second Counts

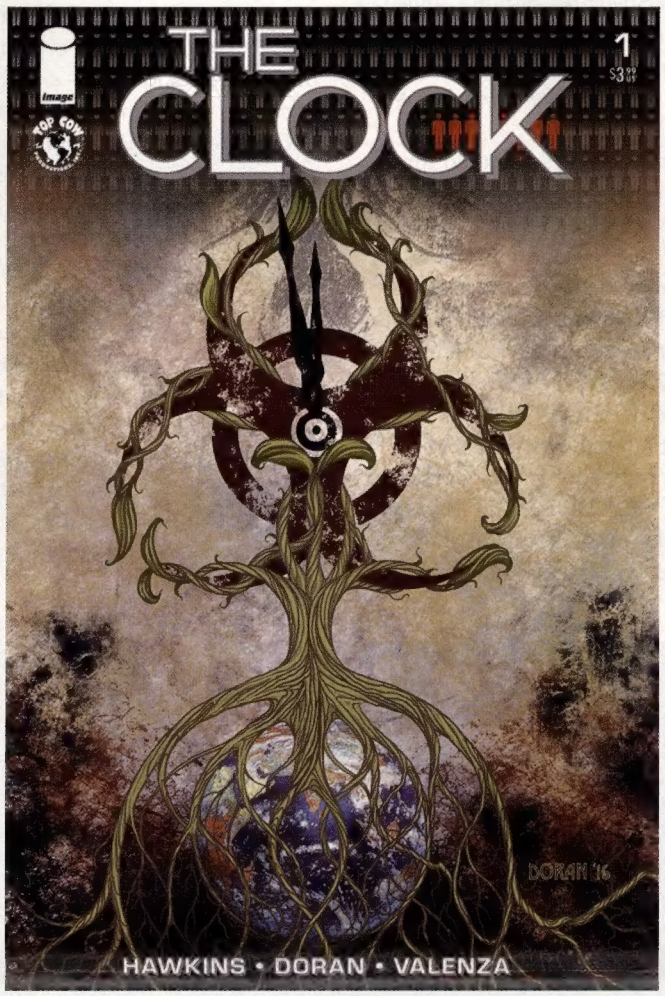
It seems that hardly a week goes by without a story about an outbreak of a viral, bacterial, or fungal infection somewhere in the world. Often it's contained in a relatively short period of time; sometimes it draws international attention. Within a few weeks or months, though, the news moves on to the next story, and the infection becomes a forgotten story.

Think how different that would be, however, if the outbreak affected not hundreds or thousands, but hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Imagine the terror if the outbreak caused people to contract various forms of aggressive cancer resulting in death.

Actually, you don't have to imagine it, because *Matt Hawkins & Colleen Doran* have imagined it for you in the pages of their new Image miniseries ***The Clock.***

"***The Clock*** is a eugenics conspiracy thriller set in the present about the weaponization of cancer," writer *Matt Hawkins* told ***CSN.*** "The scientific community is befuddled by a vast proliferation of cancer rates in clusters that expand like a viral outbreak would. The story is told from the perspective of a leading cancer researcher whose wife has already died from this new cancer, and his nine-year-old daughter is dying. He has to rush against the clock to find a cure to save his daughter and half of the world's population."

The Clock touches on universal fears of uncontrollable illness, tapping into our natural fear of rapidly spreading infections that take hold in various parts of the world (West Nile, Ebola, bird flu, T. Gulosa, hantavirus... the list is continually expanding, it seems), as well as supposedly controlled illnesses making their return (measles, anyone?). Hawkins explained how he turned those fears into a compelling miniseries: "I met several immunotherapists (special type of cancer researchers) at a biotech convention here in Los Angeles I attended a few years ago. I asked them if there was a way to make cancer into a weapon. They initially didn't want to help me for obvious reasons, but I persisted, and one of them broke down to me how those who have the genetic predisposition to cancer fight it off. Turns out you can turn off a couple of simple markers in someone's genetic code that will make it infinitely more difficult to fight it off. So you'd just need to manufacture a mass way of dissemination... *that's* the conspiracy."



The loss of those we love—especially spouses, children, and parents—is a universal fear, and Hawkins taps into that concern s well. The outbreak puts the protagonist under a tremendous amount of stresss to save his daughter. "He lost his wife to this, and now his daughter is slowly dying," Hawkins said. "As a father, I know this would just destroy me, and having to deal with that while trying to grieve his wife creates a horrible scenario for our hero to triumph over."

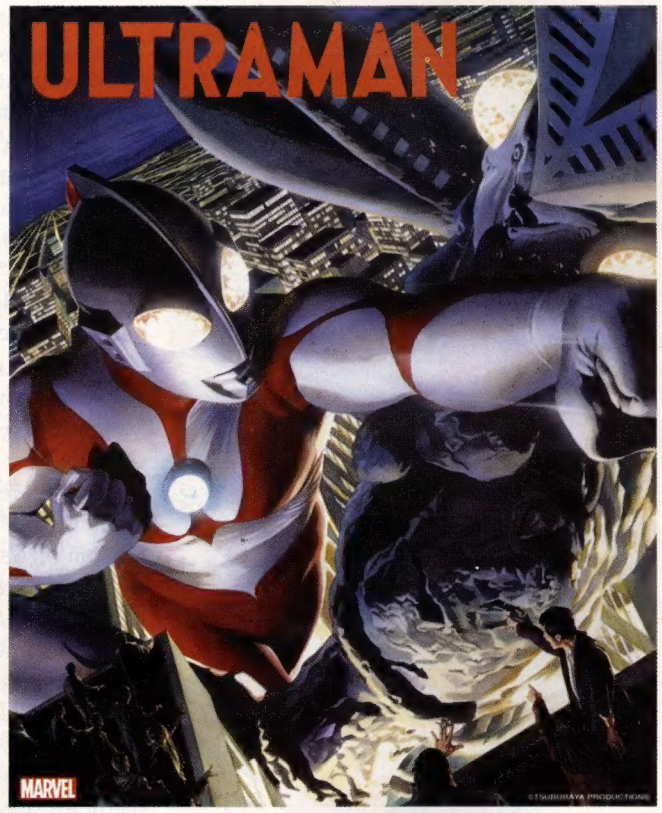
Is the outbreak a weaponized virus, or is it something more complex than that? "It's more complex than that, and it's one of the story's big reveals, so I don't even want to hint about how it is disseminated," Hawkins said—but with the series appearing on a monthly basis, readers won't have to wait too long to learn the answers.

Hawkins and Doran first began talking about ***The Clock*** several years ago. Has the story changed during the time that the concept was in development, as the world faces more worries about rapidly spreading illnesses, antibiotic-resistant infections, mutating viruses, etc? "It has been updated, that's for sure!" Hawkins said. "I'm glad for the delay, actually, because they discovered that one of the elements I was using in the story is no longer considered plausible."

The Clock marks the first time that Hawkins has collaborated with acclaimed artist *Colleen Doran*—but he hopes it won't be the last. "I've known Colleen since the early days of Image and have always wanted to work with her. Flash forward 28 years, and here we are, working together. Colleen is a master, and I'm lucky to be working with her."

The Clock #1, a $3.99 comic from Image that kicks off the four-issue miniseries, is scheduled for January 8th release.

by Cliff Biggers



Ultraman Looks Forward To a Marvelous Future

Marvel is no stranger to licensed properties—after all, it's currently the comic book home of ***Star Wars*** and ***Conan,*** and in the past it has produced acclaimed runs of comics featuring the Transformers, Micronauts, Rom, Indiana Jones, Godzilla, and others. But there's a new and unexpected edition joining Marvel's licensed property line in 2020: Ultraman!

As Marvel explained, "Ultraman has been a pop culture classic ever since his introduction in the 1960s, resulting in more than 50 years of stories told on screen and in the pages of manga and comics. Today, Ultraman continues to be a worldwide phenomenon, but fans will always remember the groundbreaking thrill and wonder of the first generation of Ultraman that started it all. Beginning next year, Marvel will expand that iconic era of the Ultras through the lens of Marvel's art and storytelling."

"As one of the world's most popular franchises, Ultraman has brought together some of the most passionate fandoms in pop culture today, and we can't wait to bring his story to even more fans around the globe," Marvel Editor-in-chief *CB Cebulski* said. "Like Marvel, ***Ultraman*** captivated generations by telling spectacular stories grounded in the real world, and it continues to be a beloved classic through its television shows, movies, toys, games, comics, and more. We are so thrilled to introduce new chapters to the Ultraman Multiverse next year."

"We are delighted to announce the partnership with Marvel, one of the leading entertainment companies that has produced fascinating characters and stories loved by fans across the globe for over 80 years," Tsuburaya Productions CEO *Takayuki Tsukagoshi* added. "We can't be more excited to explore and create new stories for the Ultraman franchise with Marvel and bringing them to both Marvel and Ultraman fans all around the world."

Courtesy of your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Marvel has plans to produce both comics and graphic novels starring Ultraman; look for more news regarding release schedules and creative teams in the not-too-distant future!

Clover Means Good Luck for Eisner Fans

The comic shop is a better place with *Will Eisner* in it.

Alas, it's been more than a decade since DC collected Eisner's work in the long-out-of-print ***Will Eisner's Spirit Archives*** hardcover collections—and while Dynamite offered new Spirit series by *Matt Wagner, Francesco Francavilla,* and others, it never collected Eisner's classic tales.

But a new publisher is about to remedy that oversight.

Clover Press, a new publishing venture from IDW co-founders *Ted Adams & Robbie Robbins,* with the assistance of *Elaine LaRosa* and *Nate Murray,* is bringing Eisner's Spirit back in a series of more affordable volumes. "Clover is a boutique publishing company focused on quality content," Clover said. "We're excited to be bringing a brand-new format to the world: a graphic novel that's priced like a trade paperback and feels like a hardcover. We think you'll find this modern format is special in its value and production quality."

The new format will premiere with three offerings, including ***Spirit 80th Anniversary Celebration Volume 1,*** a February 26th release that collects 10 stories by *Will Eisner,* five of them with all-new coloring by Eisner Award–winning colorist *Laura Martin.* "After you read these stories, you'll understand why the most important award in comics is named for him," Clover said.

The second title, slated for March 4th release, is ***Kevin Eastman's Totally Twisted Tales,*** a 96-page collection of stories by *Kevin Eastman & Simon Bisley* that Clover describes as "three full-length stories featuring guys, girls, monsters, mutants, superheroes, slackers and lowlifes—as well as one *very* fast rat!"

Clover's third offering, scheduled for March 11th release, is ***Pirates Book One,*** a *Craig Yoe*–curated 80-page graphic novella featuring rarely seen vintage pirate tales by *Wally Wood, Frank Frazetta, Reed Crandall, Graham Ingels, Dick Briefer,* and others. This superb collection deserves a place on the bookshelf of any EC library, since it features work by some of EC's finest talents.

And this isn't all that Clover has in the works: The new publisher is also working with *Steve Niles, Sara Richard,* and *Matt Bors* on future projects—and as soon as they're ready for release, you'll hear about 'em in ***CSN!***

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in February

A best-of-the-best secret agent with memories he couldn't possibly possess, a mystery writer in her 60s who spends her retirement solving crimes, a man of action with mysterious drugs that keep him ahead of a constant string of targeted disasters, a seemingly omnipotent terrorist organization that might be behind it all—and they're all connected to one man: a science-fiction author with more information than seems possible, whose books may hold the key to either saving reality or destroying it in ***BANG! #1*** (by *Matt Kindt & Wlfredo Torres).*

In ***Blackwood: The Mourning After #1*** (by *Evan Dorkin, Veronica Fish, & Andy Fish),* Blackwood College is in mourning after the death of Dean Ogden, unaware there's a traitor in their midst looking to bury the entire school. Meanwhile, the students continue to deal with Dennis's death, a situation that Reiko not only refuses to accept but plans to rectify. Will mayhem ensue? Duh.

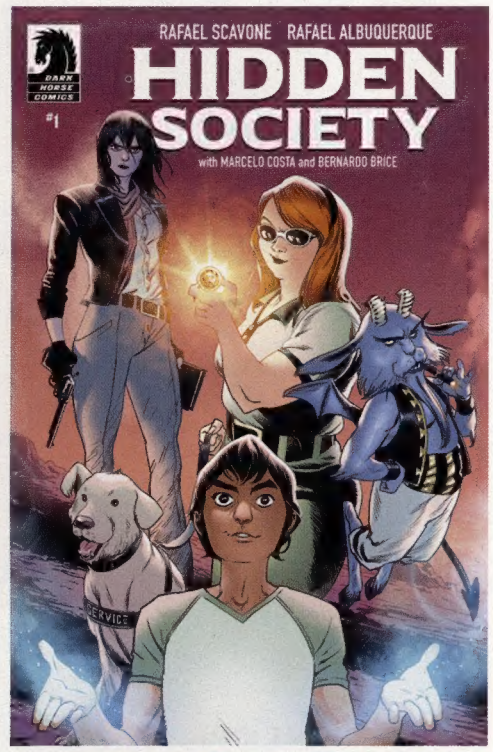
If there is one thing Dash is known for, it's being the embodiment of speed. But when a new, mysterious villain arrives on

the scene, the family rush to the city's defense but quickly discover they are at a disadvantage, leaving Dash changed in a way he never imagined in ***Disney/Pixar The Incredibles 2: Slow Burn #1*** (by *Christos Gage & Jean-Claudio Vinci).*

The "monster" Frankenstein continues his journey northward in ***Frankenstein Undone #2*** (by *Mike Mignola, Scott Allie, & Ben Stenbeck).* Still trapped between the weight of his guilt and his desire for redemption, Frankenstein may have to choose once and for all when an encounter with the crew of an ice-bound ship leads him into danger on the ice!

Years after he banished the Crooked Man, Hellboy returns to Appalachia when a young psychic warns Tom Ferrell of looming danger in ***Hellboy and the BPRD: The Return of Effie Cobb #1*** (by *Mike Mignola & Zach Howard).* But the Crooked Man's house is no longer empty, and threats both new and old simmer in the Virginia woods.

Hidden from ordinary eyes, there is a world alongside our own, full of deities, demons, and danger—where magic wins out over science and dark secrets lie in wait. In ***Hidden Society #1*** (by *Rafael Scavone & Rafael Albuquerque),* Ulloo, the last wizard



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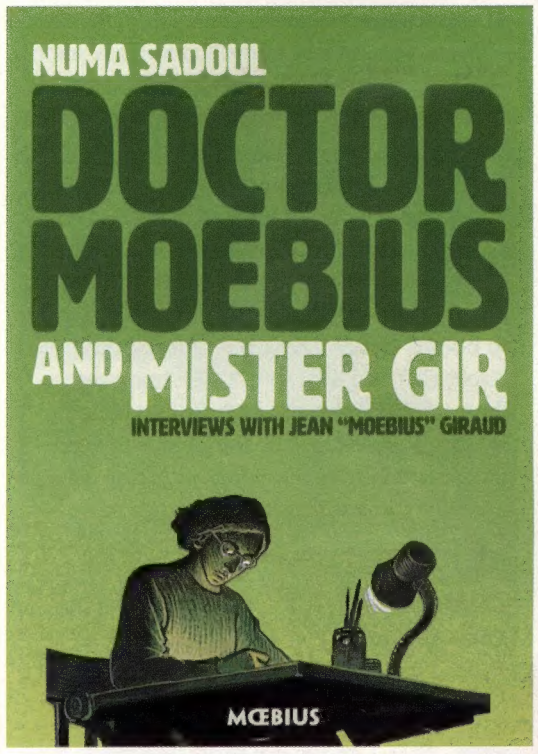
Transcontinental Interweb, Boucherville, Qc, Canada

from the Hidden Society, enlists the aid of a blind girl and her demon, a young magician, and a cursed bounty hunter in order to stop a group of nihilist warlocks from waking the Society's greatest nemesis: a primeval force that, unchecked, will scorch the planet bare of all life.



Moebius Library: Doctor Moebius and Mister Gir TP features *Numa Sadoul's* landmark interviews with *Jean "Moebius" Giraud.* The master reflects on his many lives as an artist and a man, from his ***Heavy Metal*** breakthrough era to a year before his untimely passing.

Raphael Herrera was a drug runner until the fateful night when his men were wiped out by an unearthly monster. Now, as part of the Predator Hunters team, Herrera's worst memory is reborn in ***Predator Hunters III #1*** (by *Chris Warner & Brian Thies).* Cartel soldiers are being wiped out in the jungles of Central America, and that means the Predators have returned!

In ***Stranger Things: Into the Fire #2*** (by *Jody Houser, Ryan Kelly, & LeBeau Underwood),* two former subjects of Dr Brenner in Hawkins Lab learn the depths of his sinister ambition after tracking down Subject Eight as she reveals her unwilling role in keeping Subject Nine pacified. Their quest brings them closer to the broken and incredibly powerful pyrokinetic and reveals secrets to their own painful histories that originally brought them to Hawkins.

Still under suspicion by the townsfolk she has sworn to protect, Bernice continues to track down the source of the ghostly song that raises the dead in ***Tales from Harrow County: Death's Choir #3*** (by *Cullen Bunn, Tyler Crook, & Naomi Franquiz).* But just as she gets closer to the truth, she must contend with a new threat: a vicious banshee called forth by the choir.

A Russian computer virus has jumped the species barrier and wiped out most of the adult population, leaving the world precariously in the hands of the next generation in ***Tomorrow #1*** (by *Peter Milligan & Jesus Hervas).* In the wake of devastation, musical prodigy Oscar Fuentes is separated from his twin sister, Cira. Stranded on opposite sides of the country, they're swept into rapidly evolving networks of teenage gangs. Can Oscar find his way back to Cira, or will they be lost to each other forever, in a dangerous makeshift civilization that is mercilessly replacing the past?

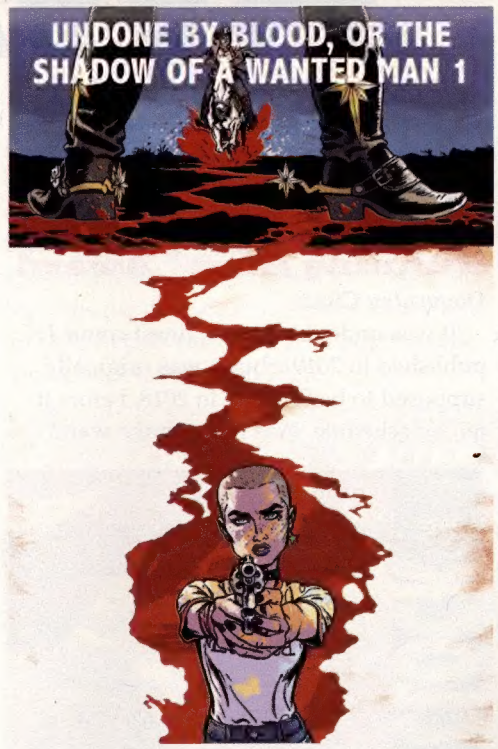
Dark Horse collected editions include:

- ***Abraham Stone TP,*** collecting *Joe Kubert's* Abraham Stone graphic novels.
- ***Aliens vs Predator: 30th Anniversary—The Original Comics Series HC,*** collecting the original Dark Horse stories in one massive volume.
- ***Count Crowley: Reluctant Midnight Monster Hunter TP,*** collecting the four-issue miniseries.
- ***Disney Frozen: True Treasure TP,*** collecting the three-issue miniseries.
- ***EC Archives: Impact HC,*** collecting the complete run of EC's ***Impact.***
- ***Everything Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Everything #s 1–5.***
- ***Fight Club 3 HC,*** collecting the 12-issue series.
- ***Lady Killer Volume 1 Library Edition HC,*** collecting the complete ***Lady Killer*** saga in one 288-page volume.
- ***Ruby Falls TP,*** collecting the four-issue miniseries.
- ***Strayed TP,*** collecting the five-issue miniseries.
- ***Triage TP,*** collecting ***Triage #s 1–5.***

Coming Comics—AfterShock in February

Sean Bennett is just your everyday, ordinary lab worker in a high-tech lab with a prototype time machine. And, yeah, he's got the same temptations any of us would have about going back in time, just a bit, to correct mistakes of the past and right old wrongs. So when he meets a version of himself from the future who encourages him to do just that, Sean takes the temporal plunge in ***The Man Who Effed Up Time #1*** (by *John Layman & Karl Mostert).*

Abdul Alhazred is an Arab-American folklore professor turned soldier whose fear of death stems from uncertainty about the existence of an afterlife. Then he joins the Godkillers, a special forces unit tasked with fighting insurgents who use mythological creatures as weapons of mass destruction in ***Godkillers #1*** (by *Mark Sable & Maan House).* Now that he knows the supernatural exists, he'll have to decide which is worse—death or the nightmarish monsters he thought were mere legends.



In the early 1970s, Ethel Grady Lane returns to her hometown of Sweetheart, Arizona, with one thing on her mind: killing the man who murdered her family. But first she'll have to find him, in ***Undone by Blood, or The Shadow of a Wanted Man #1*** (by *Lonnie Nadler, Zac Thompson, & Sami Kivela).*

AfterShock collected editions include:

- ***Animosity Volume 5 TP,*** collecting ***Animosity #s 19–24.***
- ***Pestilence: The Complete Series HC,*** collecting ***Pestilence, Pestilence: Story of Satan,*** and more.

Coming Comics—Image in February

Forces have conspired against Malcolm Dragon and his family—but is *Erik Larsen's* ***Savage Dragon #250*** a turning point or... the end? Find out in this landmark 100-page issue!

In the aftermath of Ragnarök, Oona, an elven ranger, sets out into the postapocalyptic chaos to discover the fate of the old gods in *Michael Avon Oeming's* ***The After Realm Quarterly #1.*** But first, she must fulfill an oath to a lost friend that could doom what's left of the Nine Realms.

History diverged in 1868 when a pivotal presidential debate turned violent. Today, elections are decided by highly publicized hand-to-hand combat in arenas called Stumps. Unfortunately, the violence doesn't end in the ring, and powerful people can still get away with murder. Senator Jack Hammer and FBI Agent Anna Bell Lister are teaming up to bring it all down in ***On the Stump #1*** (by *Chuck Brown & Prenzy).*

Promising young cadet Tilde is framed for crimes against the empire after discovering her mother was the ruthless warlord of the deadly colony Tartarus, a vital player in the galactic war. Now, Tilde's only way home may be to reclaim her mother's dark crown in ***Tartarus #1*** (by *Johnnie Christmas & Jack T. Cole).*

Image collected editions include:

- ***100% TP,*** collecting *Paul Pope's* ***100% #s 1–5.***
- ***Analog Volume 2 TP,*** collecting ***Analog #s 6–10.***
- ***Battlepug Volume 1: War on Christmas TP,*** collecting ***Battlepug: The Series #s 1–5.***
- ***Dead Eyes Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Dead Eyes #s 1–4.***
- ***Die Volume 2: Split the Party TP,*** collecting ***Die #s 6–10.***
- ***Hit Girl Volume 6 TP,*** collecting ***Hit Girl Season Two #s 9–12.***
- ***Lazarus Volume 1 TP,*** collecting ***Lazarus #s 1–4*** along with a new short tale.
- ***Rat Queens Volume 7: The Once and Future King TP,*** collecting ***Rat Queens Volume 2 #s 16–20.***
- ***The Weatherman Volume 2 TP,*** collecting ***Weatherman Volume 2 #s 1–6.***

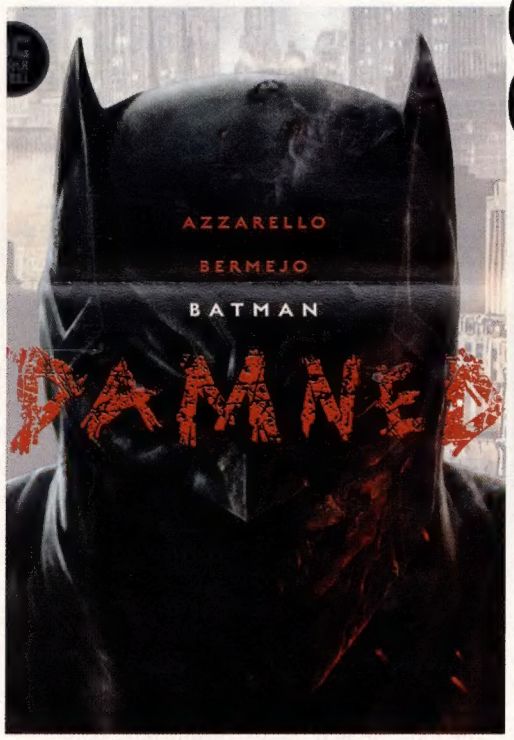
COMIC SHOP NEWS 29th ANNUAL RED K AWARDS

Yes, another year has come and gone—and with it, another mixture of amazing accomplishments and dubious achievements. And of course, that means that it's time for our once-a-year tribute to the best and worst of the past 12 months! So without further ado, we present the ***2019 CSN Red K Awards***, our way of recognizing the most noteworthy hits and misses of the past year. (And just like the fabled Red K of the *Mort Weisinger* Superman era for which these awards are named, Red K Awards can be unpredictable!)

The "Artgerm for Art's Sake" Award

Stanley "Artgerm" Lau

There are very few artists working today whose cover illustration can significantly move the needle in terms of comic book sales—but there's no doubt that *Stanley "Artgerm" Lau* is the one man whose art can make a major sales difference. Marvel, DC, Dynamite, Titan—every one of them saw the impact of Artgerm variants on their advance orders—and it seems that no matter how many copies retailers order, it's never enough to satisfy that Artgerm demand!



The "Still Feeling the Pressure" Award

Batman: Damned HC

DC managed to black out the offending art from the first issue when it collected the series in hardcover—but it forgot to correct the error in which Batman's computer confuses a heart rate and a blood pressure reading. Either that, or else Batman's a *very* bad software engineer...

The "Eight More Is Enough" Award

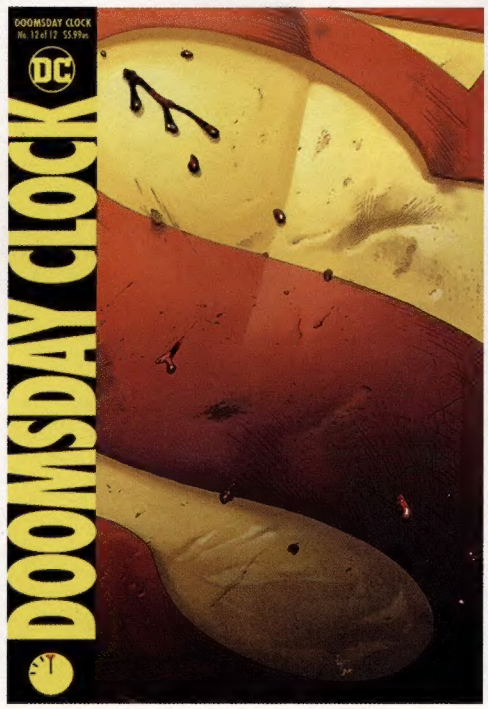
24-Page Comics

If you've picked up a comic and thought that it felt like something was missing—well, perhaps it was! *Eight* somethings might have been missing, in fact: eight pages of content. Several publishers have moved to the 24-page comic format rather than the 32-page format that has been the norm for more than 60 years now. Let's hope they reconsider—a comic needs to feel like a *comic*, not a flimsy promotional giveaway!

The "Clock Was Running Slow" Award

Doomsday Clock

It was undoubtedly the finest comic DC published in 2019... but it was originally supposed to be finished in 2018, before it fell off schedule. Was it worth the wait? Certainly! But imagine how much more impact it could have had without those lengthy delays...



The "Buck Stops Here" Award

Marvel's Dollar Comics

Marvel was the first publisher to turn the dollar reprint comic into an attractive product line, and now DC and others have joined in on the fun. The low price is a great way for readers to sample classic tales from the past... and if they like what they find between those covers, then there are often ads directing them to a trade paperback or hardcover that complements the introductory book. And unlike other publishers, Marvel offers at least 10 new $1 comics every month!

The "Many Happy Returns" Award

The Return of Returnability

For most comic shops, nonreturnable first issues are a gamble. Order too few, and customers begin to lose confidence in a shop to meet their needs; order too many, and it can pile up until customers lose the shop! Kudos to Boom!, Image, Dynamite, AfterShock, Vault, DC, and others for offering no-cost returnability for many of their first issues, making it possible for comic shops to keep their customers happy without taking an excessive financial risk in the process.

The "Miller Time" Award

Frank Miller

First he delivered the best-written Black Label title of 2019, ***Superman: Year One.*** Then he turned in a superb stand-alone tale, ***Dark Knight: The Golden Child*** that picks up shortly after his ***Dark Knight: The Master Race*** left off. Sure, we'd love to see Miller doing more art as well—but as long as he's turning out top-notch stories like these, we're perfectly happy with *Frank Miller*, writer!

The "It's in the Cards" Award

Cardstock Covers

For decades, comic book covers were printed on sturdier paper that helped to protect the book. In recent years, though, publishers have gone to a "self-covered" format, which means that the cover stock is the same paper used on the interior of the book. That means increased damages and fewer near-mint copies on the comic shop

racks. A few publishers are bucking that trend with cardstock covers, which maintain their condition better and protect the interior pages from damage. Some publishers offer the cardstock covers at no extra cost; others, like DC, offer readers a choice of cardstock variants for a slightly higher price than the standard-paper cover editions. A lot of collectors feel like it's worth the cost, though!

The "Ad-ded Appeal" Award

Facsimile Reprints

Once again, Marvel leads the industry in producing high-quality original-ads-and-all reprints of some of its most desirable (and hardest-to-find) key issues, including ***Fantastic Four #1, Amazing Fantasy #15, X-Men #1,*** and ***Incredible Hulk #1.*** Even collectors who have the ultra-expensive original printings often find these facsimile editions irresistible, since readers can enjoy them without worrying about damaging a valuable collectible. (Now if only DC would expand its facsimile reprint program to include some of its ultra-desirable Silver and Golden Age first issues...)

The "Fantastic Plastic" Award

PVC Statues

As cast resin statues climbed in price to $150 to $200 each, and sometimes even more than that, a lot of collectors felt like they were being priced out of the statue market. Then Kotobukiya and Diamond Select rolled out their high-quality PVC statue line, offering ultra-detailed sculpts of popular characters with an equally popular $50 to $80 pricepoint. The statues look just as good on your shelf, and your budget looks a lot better without that big financial hit.

The "Verti-gone" Award

The Demise of Vertigo

For more than a quarter-century, Vertigo was the flagship imprint for sophisticated storytelling, compelling horror, provocative fantasy, and suspenseful thrillers. It was the yardstick by which other companies' mature-readers lines were measured. Publishers would strive to launch their own version of Vertigo, sometimes even bringing in staff and creators associated with the esteemed imprint. But without a visionary leader like *Karen Berger* to drive the line, Vertigo had struggled to define itself, and this fall, DC decided to pull the plug. What a shame that the imprint famous for ***Sandman, Preacher, Hellblazer, Swamp Thing, Fables, Y—The Last Man,*** and so many other outstanding series has come to an end. Let's hope that sometime in the future, DC will decide the time is right for Vertigo's return—and let's hope that *Karen Berger* is on hand to make sure it's done right!

The "Legion Lost" Award

Legion of Super-Heroes: Millennium

Wouldn't you think that, if the team's name is a part of the book's title, that maybe they might show up in the first issue? Or perhaps appear in more than a couple of pages in the second issue? Perhaps the name for this one should have been ***Thorn: Millennium***.

The "Done in One" Award

Marvel's Standalone Oneshots

Captain America: Invaders—Bahamas Triangle... New Mutants: War Children... Fantastic Four: Negative Zone... Thor: Worthy... Incredible Hulk: Last Call... Avengers: Loki Unleashed... These are just a few of the standalone oneshots that Marvel released in 2019. With so many publishers relying on decompressed story arcs, it's nice to see a few books that offer a complete story in one comic, produced by first-class comics talent. If only it was the rule and not the exception!

The "Missing in Action" Award

Barry Windsor-Smith

Every year, we keep hoping that this might be the year that marks the comic book return of one of the field's most talented artists... and every year we're disappointed. Will 2020 be the year that it finally happens? We can only hope...

The "Honorary Cimmerian" Award

Roy Thomas

Roy Thomas was the man who brought *Robert E. Howard* to Marvel comics, way back in 1970. He's written more Conan stories than anyone—and he's still writing them, as ***Savage Sword of Conan #s 10–12*** aptly demonstrated. In just a few pages, he captures the essence of Conan in a way that no other writer can. Now let's hope that he comes back for more in 2020!

The "Bad Boys, Bad Boys, Whatcha Gonna Do?" Award

DC Comics

Year of the Villain.... The Batman Who Laughs... Infected... does it seem like every corner of the DC Universe is absolutely *infested* with malevolent menaces engaged in interminable schemes to conquer the DC Universe? What happened to the optimism of ***Rebirth***, which brought lapsed readers back to DC in droves? Even the Black Label line seems to be obsessed with superhero grimdark, with only *Frank Miller, John Romita Jr, & Klaus Janson's* ***Superman: Year One*** breaking the gritty trend.

The "Absolute-ly the Best" Award

Absolute Alan Moore Swamp Thing Volume 1 HC

Everyone already knew that *Alan Moore, Steve Bissette, & John Totleben's* ***Swamp Thing*** is one of the most compellingly told and beautifully illustrated comics series in history—but what we didn't know was that star colorist *Steve Oliff* was recoloring *every*

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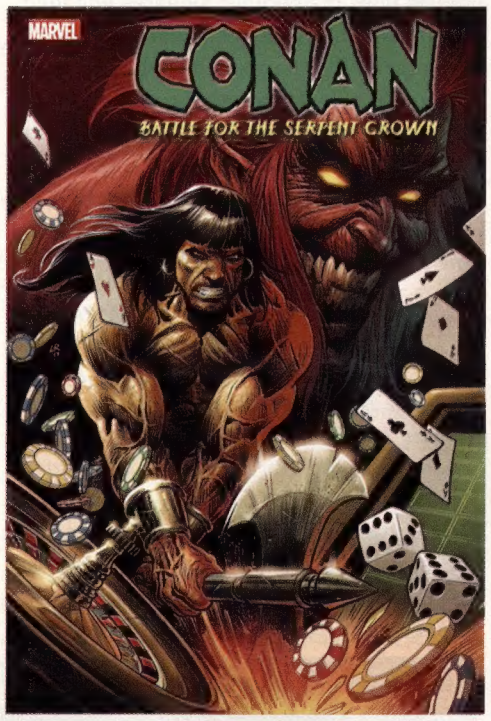
single comics page for this collection. And this isn't just routine coloring: Oliff has transformed every page into a lavishly colored masterwork that perfectly complements the ultra-detailed Bissette-Totleben linework. Every new colorist should study this book to see what a difference fine coloring can make.



The "Conan of Some Area" Award

Conan

Conan of Cimmeria... or Aquilonia... or Stygia... or the Savage Land... or Las Vegas... or the World of 2099. Boy, *Robert E. Howard's* barbarian hero really gets around, doesn't he? The good thing is, no matter where Marvel sets Conan's adventures, they still make for great reading!

The "Coming Attractions" Award

Second Coming

Mark Russell & Richard Pace's clever religion-meets-superhero series found a home at Ahoy when DC caved to internet pressure (from people who had never read the book) and dropped the title from its line—

and orders actually *went up* under the new publisher. There was good reason for the increase, of course: ***Second Coming*** is the sort of series that any publisher should be happy to add to its line!

BOOM! STUDIOS

The "Boom Year" Award

Boom!

Something Is Killing the Children... Folklords... Heartbeat... Once & Future... Red Mother... These are just some of the sold-out hits that have made Boom! a publishing force to be reckoned with. Even better, they routinely work with retailers to ensure that large quantities of their books are available on a no-risk basis to comic shops—and they often take that same no-risk position with the second issues of their new and unproven series. Best of all, they're producing the sort of comics that keep readers coming back for more!

The "Nothing Sketchy About This Offer!" Award

Absolute Carnage #1

This may have been one of the most generous added extras in comic book history—and one of the best-kept secrets! Ace illustrator *Mark Bagley*—the man who has illustrated more Spider-Man comics than any other artist—supplied 20 original sketches on the inside back covers of 20 random copies of ***Absolute Carnage #1.*** Now *that's* an added-value incentive! (So far, only a handful of them have been publicly acknowledged, so somewhere out there may be unsold copies of ***Absolute Carnage #1*** with quite a bonus hiding inside!)

The "Too Much of a Good Thing" Award

Variant Covers

The occasional variant isn't a bad thing, but do comics really need six, 10, 17, or 26 variant covers? (And that's not even counting the store-exclusive variants!) And when some of those variants are 1-for-1000 copies, it ensures that casual collectors (and most comic shops) have no chance of getting copies of those books without going broke in the process.

The MIA Award 2

Saga

When *Brian K. Vaughan & Fiona Staples* put ***Saga*** on hiatus after the release of issue #54 back in July of 2018, they told us that they anticipated a one-year break between that issue and the launch of the next story arc. Alas, the book never returned in 2019, and it's not on the list of upcoming titles through February of 2020, either. Don't keep us waiting—we're all dying to see the return of one of Image's finest series!

The "Vampire Undead" Award

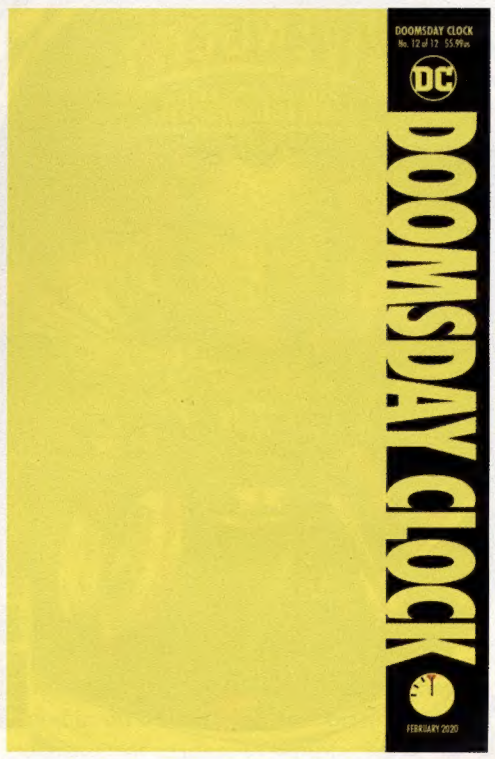
Christopher Priest's Vampirella

Christopher Priest took a franchise that lost its bite and gave it wings. Suddenly ***Vampirella*** is at the top of Dynamite's sales charts, and lapsed readers have rediscovered the appeal of comics' veteran vampire.

The "Mellow Yellow" Award

Doomsday Clock #12's Yellow Blank Variant

Now *this* is a variant done right. The blank yellow cover with black logo and trade dress captures the quintessential look

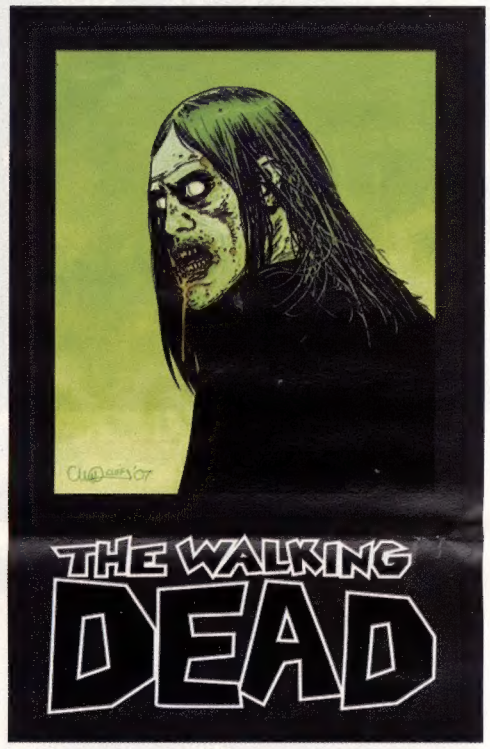


and feel of ***Watchmen*** and ***Doomsday Clock***—and DC offered it with no minimum buy-ins, no qualifying orders, and no hoops to jump through. As a result, lots of fans ended up buying an extra copy of this series finale!

The "Secret Society" Award

Justice Society

When the Legion returned, they got a high-profile limited series and a major relaunch. But when the Justice Society finally made an appearance in the post-Rebirth DC Universe, they got buried in a very long ***Justice League*** story arc with scarcely a mention in the solicitation copy for two of those issues, and no mention at all for the remaining installments. Come on, DC, show a little respect for your elders!



The "Walk On" Award

Walking Dead

Like everyone else, we were startled by Rick's unexpected death—and we were stunned by the end of the best-selling ***Walking Dead*** series. *Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard* had made the series into one of comics' "old reliables"—always compelling, always thought-provoking, and always enjoyable. Let's hope that this isn't the last time Kirkman will take us into the world of the Walking Dead; there are still so many stories waiting to be told and so much more we'd like to know about this world and its struggle to overcome a zombie outbreak. And that leads to our next award...

The "Keep on Walking" Award

Walking Dead: Alien

Kudos to Image for releasing the highest-profile book in the history of Local Comic Shop Day: a squarebound collection of *Brian K. Vaughan & Marcos Martin's* ***Walking Dead: Alien,*** previously only available digitally. Readers who want a *complete* collection of ***Walking Dead*** comics will have to have this superb tale of Rick

Grimes' brother and his experiences in Europe as the zombie infestation begins.

The "Most X-cellent!" Award

House of X/Powers of X

In 12 weekly issues, *Jonathan Hickman* revitalized the entire mutant franchise, taking *X-Men* in a bold new direction and changing Marvel history in the process. The series served as a relaunching pad for the entire mutant franchise, and titles like ***Marauders*** and ***Fallen Angels,*** which likely would have generated very little traction prior to ***HoX/PoX,*** are sellout successes.

And Now... It's Your Turn!

You've seen our awards—now what accomplishments, near-misses, follies, and/or failures would you like to memorialize? Remedy our oversight with an award of your own! Remember, cleverness counts—and we encourage you to mind your manners and avoid vitriolic vituperation!

E-mail your nominations to **redk@comicshopnews.com** or snail-mail 'em to:

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Not only will the best reader submissions see print in *CSN,* but we'll choose from among the published entries and award a few special prizes to three lucky winners!

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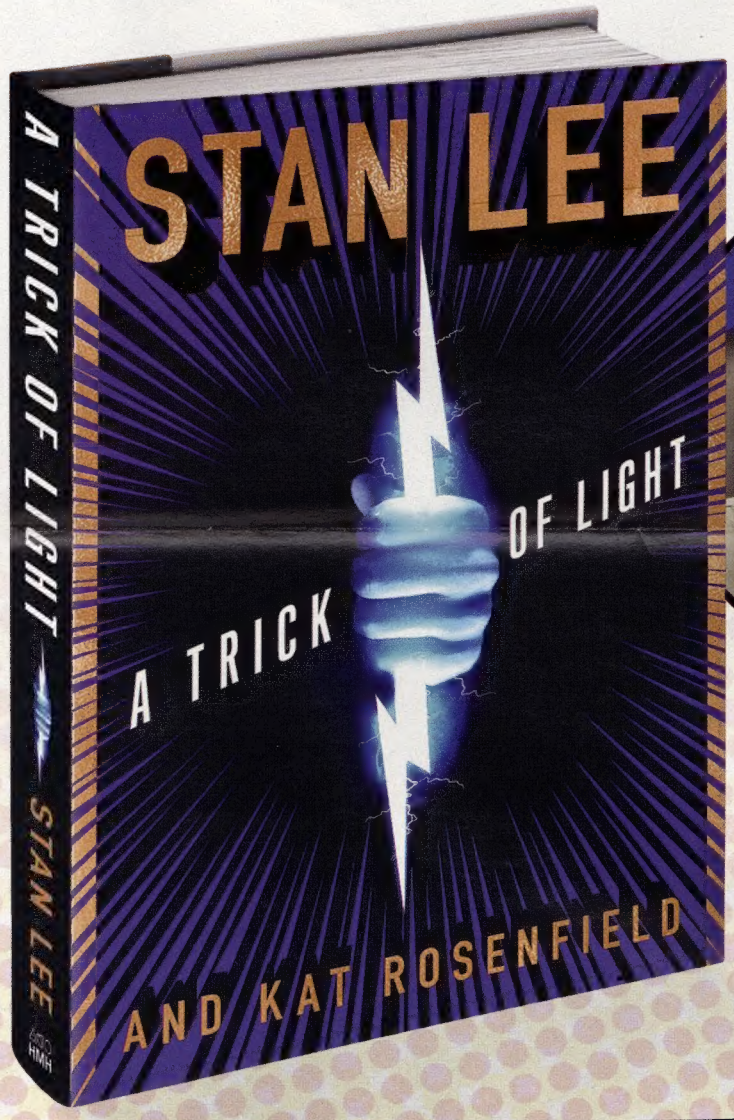

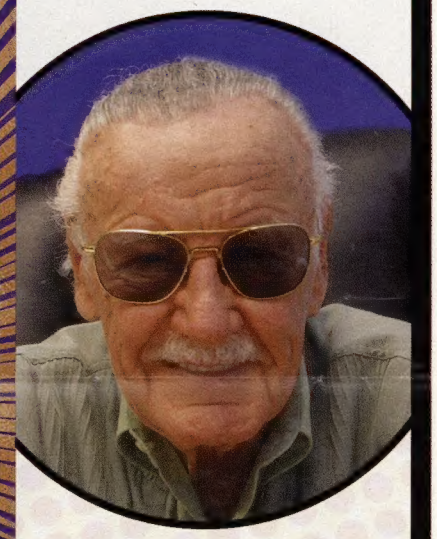

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